



republished from the more mid-march 2011 archives

buffoonery



tomorrow is saturday 19th of march, and at 10am i am due to join with mr hastings to entertain and hopefully educate those attending port mor wheelers. i assume that i have no real need to point out that port more centre, situated a few hundred metres outside port charlotte village is not within shouting distance of either milan or sanremo. and given all that information, it is easy to see that i will not be joining michael robertson of *velodramatic* in following the longest of the season's classic from start to finish. if i were, i can assure you i would not be sitting in my living room typing this (no offence intended).

it's really not fair that those iconic routes in central europe have all the fun. why is it that riding from paris to roubaix velodrome is renowned as a classic? are those not roads well trammed over the years, or perhaps even centuries by vehicles and persons other than bicycles? i think you know i'm right, yet we insist on referring to most of the forthcoming rides as the *spring classics*. why has someone else got the classics? why can't we all have classics? for after all, the word is so subjective; one man's classic is another man's commute. granted, perhaps not many italians drive or take the bus from milan to sanremo, or perhaps even in the opposite direction, but is it right and proper that when a bunch of cyclists decide to ride that very route, it becomes a classic?



why don't we, for instance, take a look about our locality to see if there are some suitable roads that could be *peletonised* and ridden either as fast as humanly possible, or attacked in similar manner to those cobbles that inconveniently lie between paris and roubaix. maybe rapha have the right idea by scattering sections of gravé in between rideable sections of road. we've all got bits of muddy farm track here and thereabouts that aren't doing much else.

i know you think that i'm heading down the long unpaved road to dementia, but if that is indeed true, then i am in good company. brian ignatin for one. he has appeared within these pixels on more than one occasion before, but persistent devil that he is, i receive timely reminders of his attempts to hijack the notion of european spring classics and import them to portions of pennsylvania. after all, he's only doing what most of us were thinking in the first place. after all, a road is a road, so who's to say that the experience, atmosphere and yellow and black lion of flanders flags cannot be brought to an alternative location. the first of the transplants takes place on saturday march 26th in lambertville, hunterdon county new jersey.

l'enfer d'hunterdon.



this, the third annual running of a 76 mile (122km) belgian themed ride features 18 sections of gravé winding through scenic farmland and country towns in new jersey's sourlands. though you can wimp out and attempt the distance on a cyclocross bike, anything with tyres wider than 23mm should be just fine. and in the true spirit of european racing, where the professionals ride one race in preparation for the ride they truly want to capture, the hell of the hunterdon is excellent preparation for the tour of the battenkill on april 9th.

l'enfer d'hunterdon offers a subtle clue as to the less than serious intent of this series of three rides organised by kermesse sport, but its cohort in a triumvirate of american classics leaves little to the imagination. running the day before the *ronde van vlaanderen*, the aptly named *fools classic* is another 72 mile ride held in bucks county, pennsylvania which the website describes thus: "*lends perfectly to a tribute to the ronde van vlaanderen*". while led zeppelin assured us that *the song remains the same*, in the case of the fools classic, the route doesn't necessarily remain so, though the concept does. yet again, perfect training for those considering the tour of the battenkill on the following weekend.



in previous years, that's where the east coast classics would have ended for the season, leaving the hardy in the peak of physical degradation for the battenkill, but now, as of 2011, there is a sting in the tail, allowing a week or two of recuperation before the mashing of pedals begins again on saturday april 23 in new hope, pennsylvania in the *fleche buffoon* (named courtesy of whit yost), a tribute to the ardennes classics. this particular course distinguishes itself from its predecessors by virtue of being entirely on paved roads with ten steep climbs across its length.

this is the way the classics of the future should develop. mainland europe has held on guardedly to its classic races, but as we are constantly reminded, the world is getting ever smaller, while intercontinental demarcation is also on the wane. if you're in the neighbourhood, or could make the effort to do so, grab your bike, take a look at the future and indulge in some pennsylvanian buffoonery.

[hell of hunterdon](#) | [fools classic](#) | [fleche buffoon](#)

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[top of page.](#)
